

take them tomorrow and actually think about taking these freedoms away.

The Constitution would not have become the Constitution of the United States without the promise of the Bill of Rights. The Founders got a lot of things right. They did not get everything right. But one of the things they got right was the Bill of Rights. One thing that the States demanded when the Constitution was shown to them was: We can do that, but we are not going to do that unless we are promised that these fundamental rights that make us who we are and have the potential to make us more than we are—that these fundamental rights are guaranteed. We have never amended the Bill of Rights. So suddenly 45 Members of the Senate—with no enthusiasm for this anywhere else that I can find in the country—45 Members of the Senate have decided that for the first time ever we would amend the Bill of Rights.

Now, what does the Bill of Rights give us? It gives us freedom of religion—the first right. There will be another debate, I assume, late in the next 2 weeks to once again talk about how important is that right of conscience, that the Constitution in the Bill of Rights guarantees—the very first freedom it gives us is the freedom to believe what we believe. In fact, President Jefferson said in the decade after the Constitution was written that of all the rights, that is the one we should hold most dear: the freedom to hold our beliefs and not let the government decide how you conduct yourself in ways that violate your faith beliefs.

But right after that comes—what we are talking about—freedom of speech, the second of all those freedoms. There may be people here not at all offended by the fact that we can just bandy that around with no chance we are going to change this amendment. It is not like there are 67 cosponsors of this amendment.

I find it offensive we would talk about this as if it is a freedom so easily discussed and so easily utilized for political reasons that we just bring it up here a few weeks before the election and talk about it, even though there is no chance it could possibly be changed at this point and shouldn't be changed in the future.

The right of conscience, the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, the right to peaceably assemble, the right to petition the government—those are the five freedoms given in the First Amendment to the Constitution, and here we are talking about them as if they are nothing more than political talking points. They are who we are as a nation.

The chilling effect this discussion has on the First Amendment is concerning. I suppose part of it is to convince people: You don't want to participate in the system because you are going to be criticized if you participate in the system.

One of the great rights we have as Americans is the right to criticize those who are participating and, if we do participate, the right that others have to criticize us. This is an effort that if it occurred would certainly be a great thing for the current occupants of public office because you begin to write the rules in a way that makes it harder for those who don't hold public office to challenge those who do. No one likes being criticized, but in our country it is a fundamental part of who we are.

The Constitution wouldn't have been agreed to without the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights, as I said before, hasn't been changed. The freedom of the press is one of those rights, but it is not the only one. This amendment would go a long way toward making the press the only way people get their information and news. The press—the media generally—has a guaranteed right to do what they do, but individuals have a guaranteed right to say what they want to say, to participate as the courts and the Constitution allow in this great debate we call America.

To see that dealt with in this way—I actually wonder what people would think if they thought this was going to happen. Nobody believes this is going to happen because it is not going to happen. We are taking the people's time. We are taking the time given to us by the Constitution and the people to do the people's work, to instead talk about things that shouldn't happen, to talk about things that will not happen.

To suggest there is a real debate going on in Washington, when this is exactly what people are tired of—people in Washington not doing their job and trying to convince the people whom Washington should be working for that somehow great debates are going on, when all we are doing is getting ready for the next election, I am tired of that. I think most citizens of our country are tired of it.

For those who want to defend the Constitution, count me on their side.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

SCHOOL CERTIFICATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on Thursday this country will commemorate the 13th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

We learned many lessons from that day. One key lesson was that terrorists can and will exploit our immigration system and policies to enter and remain in the United States and now and into the future potentially harm Americans.

The 9/11 attacks were carried out by 19 hijackers, some of whom entered on student visas and trained in flight schools in the United States. The 19 individuals applied for 23 visas. They lied on their applications. They failed to abide by the terms of their visas. This

was a wake-up call that we needed better oversight of our visa programs, especially student visas. But this wasn't our first wake-up call.

In 1993 the American people were confronted with the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. One of the instigators of that attack was on an expired student visa.

Since 1993 we have mandated the tracking of foreign students and gave schools and universities a responsibility to help us monitor these programs while these students are on U.S. soil. Unfortunately, while this tracking system is up and running today, it is still antiquated and the Federal Government remains incapable of ensuring that those students who enter the country are truly attending our educational institutions.

Today nearly 10,000 schools across the country accept foreign students, and those schools are responsible for communicating with our government about the whereabouts of these students. Enrollment of foreign students is increasing.

According to the Brookings Institution, the number of foreign students on F-1 visas in U.S. colleges and universities grew from 110,000 in 2001 to 524,000 in 2012. Despite this overwhelming increase, the technology and oversight of the student visa program has insufficiently improved.

Now, 13 years after 9/11, we have sham schools setting up in strip malls with no real classrooms. We have foreign nationals entering the United States with the intent to study but then disappear and never attend a class. I will give just two examples of sham schools.

In 2011, Tri-Valley University reported that they would bring in less than 100 students but actually brought in over 1,500. Tri-Valley University officials were caught giving F-1 visas to undercover agents posing as foreign nationals who explicitly professed no intention of ever attending classes. Students paid \$5,400 per semester in tuition to the school to obtain those student visas until that school was shut down.

On May 29 this year, the Micropower Career Institute in New York was raided by Federal officials. Its top officials were arrested on student visa fraud. Allegedly, school officials did not report foreign nationals when they didn't attend classes, and they falsified those student records so the school could continue to collect Federal education dollars for those students. But despite the indictment of officials at this so-called school, it still remains open for business.

The Government Accountability Office reported to Congress in 2012 that sham schools posed a problem. We put a lot of faith in the work of the Government Accountability Office. The GAO said the Immigration and Customs Enforcement does not have a process to identify and analyze risks across schools. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has overlooked

major indicators of fraud, and they cannot follow trends or predict abuse. Two years later the problems continue to exist and the Obama administration just fiddles while the problem burns.

ABC News investigated the student visa program and made it public last week. They said 6,000 foreign nationals on student visas have disappeared. An ICE official acknowledged that they had “blended into the landscape somewhere.” Yet this number of 6,000 is not the total number of student visa overstays. This is the number of students that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement is trying to locate. That ought to be alarming news that it is only 6,000.

It is time to close the loopholes and clamp down on schools that have a poor track record with regard to foreign students. So this week I am introducing legislation that requires schools to be certified in order to bring in foreign students, and it would suspend schools if there are noncompliance issues. My bill would increase penalties for those who perpetrate fraud and require background checks and training for school officials. It would also put an immediate end to a flight school’s participation in the foreign student program if they are not FAA approved.

Finally, it would require the Department of Homeland Security to deploy an upgrade to the existing tracking system. This upgrade can be paid for by using fees from student visas and the schools that participate.

What I just said aren’t new ideas. These are provisions that were taken from a 2012 bipartisan bill led by the senior Senator from New York. That bill never passed the Senate. When the Gang of 8 wrote their misguided immigration bill, they failed to include these reforms. So I offered an amendment during committee consideration of the immigration bill last summer and it was included in the bill that passed the Senate.

The bill I am introducing today is the exact same language. It has been debated. It was accepted by unanimous consent in the Judiciary Committee.

I hope my colleagues will seriously consider the bill I am introducing. It is well past time that we close loopholes and be more vigilant in the foreign student visa program, especially with the growing terrorist threat we face.

REMEMBERING JAMES M. JEFFORDS

Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to Senator Jeffords of Vermont, who passed away last month.

Senator Jeffords died this last August while the Senate was in recess. Yesterday, the Senate appropriately adopted a resolution commemorating the former Senator.

Senator Jeffords is probably best known for switching parties, from being a Republican to an Independent and caucusing with the Democrats back in 2001. As much as that switch hurt at the time, I always held Jim in very high regard and I knew him to be a very honorable man.

Jim and I were both so-called Watergate babies—two of the very few new Republican House Members who survived the 1974 election after Nixon’s resignation and subsequent pardon. So we joined the House of Representatives together and became friends then.

It wasn’t only a tough political environment back then, it was also a physical challenge for us. During that campaign year I had surgery on my leg and was walking on crutches. Jim had been in a car accident and had a neck brace as a result of that accident.

An amusing story has been reported about the two of us. I didn’t hear it myself, but it had been brought up in a report on the funeral. The amusing story is about the two of us walking down the aisle of the House to be sworn in as freshmen after that devastating election for Republicans—this Senator on crutches and Jim with his neck brace.

Somewhere in the Chamber, a Democratic Member yelled out, “There’s two more that we almost got!”

The two of us laughed for years about that because of course we had the last laugh, serving for many years and being elected to the Senate and both becoming chairmen of committees in this body.

One of the most honorable things Jim did for me and, I believe, for the country was in regard to the 2001 tax relief bill that was by some measures the largest tax cut in history. Not many know the history of that bill. I was chairman of the Finance Committee and so was in charge of putting the bill together and getting it passed in the Senate. The process started with a budget resolution with reconciliation instructions to our Finance Committee.

The Bush administration pressed that year for a \$1.6 trillion tax cut. Senator Jeffords and others insisted that the number had to be cut by \$300 billion because they feared the money wouldn’t be there in the end. Of course, as we now know from history, they ended up being right on that point a few years later when we sank into years of deficit spending, but we needed their votes. I made it clear to President Bush and our leadership that if we wanted to get something done and have a historic tax cut, we had to lower our sights some and still get most of what we wanted.

Unfortunately, I took a lot of criticism from my side for supporting Senator Jeffords and others, but I knew where the votes were and where the votes weren’t. I remember a bunch of House Members even had a press conference saying some not-so-nice things about me and the idea of only accepting a \$1.3 trillion tax package. But our Senate Republican leadership wanted a good result, and they agreed to compromise in order to get it. That is not something you see nowadays around here on very big bills. If the majority cannot have their way, they just file cloture and let the bill die, which is

why we don’t get much done around here anymore.

But the pivotal point on the 2001 tax bill came right before the time Senator Jeffords switched political parties. I could never really blame Jim for his decision. I didn’t agree with that decision, but I know he felt he had been mistreated by some in our party and had strong disagreements with some of us on issues.

During floor consideration of the tax bill that year, we were near the end, and the Democratic minority at that time was offering amendment after amendment to stall the bill. We had gotten to the point where they were just changing a few words in an amendment and offering the same amendment again.

At that point I walked over to then-minority whip—who happens to be the current majority leader—Senator REID and asked what was going on. He said: Well, we think things may be changing around here very soon. Of course, I didn’t know what he was talking about and I assumed that some votes were going to change. But of course he was talking about the impending party switch that none of us knew anything about involving Senator Jeffords. Remember, at that time we were split 50/50. Of course, what that meant was the Senate leadership would change and presumably the new Democratic leadership would pull the tax bill from the floor and kill it. So it was important for the Democrats to stall as long as they could on the bill, anticipating the Jeffords switch. But to his great credit, Senator Jeffords came to me and told me that out of respect for me and the way I worked with him on this tax bill, he would not officially change parties until after the tax bill was passed. So we were able to finish that historic bill and get it signed into law.

This little-known episode demonstrates what an honorable man and true friend Jim Jeffords was. He didn’t let politics dictate whatever he was determined to do, and he stood by his word. I only wish we could see more of that now in today’s Senate. If we did, we would all certainly be better off, it would be a better place, our policies would be a lot better, and we would be more productive.

I commemorate Senator Jeffords in his death. My sympathies are with his family. I will miss him, and I wish him Godspeed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam President.

FACING GREAT CHALLENGES

As I come to the floor today, the Senate is debating a plan by which Washington Democrats seek to restrict the First Amendment rights of American citizens—part of the Constitution. Under this proposal certain people would no longer enjoy the same right to free speech and the same right to express themselves.

I believe this amendment is a terrible idea, and it really has no chance of becoming law. Majority Leader REID wants the vote anyway. He thinks this outrageous amendment that he dreamed up will somehow help Democrats win elections this November. The majority leader has come to the floor repeatedly to criticize and to demonize American citizens who don't share his views. It is nothing but political grandstanding and showboating.

President Obama was on "Meet the Press" last Sunday. The President talked about what is going on in Washington. The President said that "people want to get stuff done." That is what he says the American people want from their representatives in Congress. So if the American people want us to get stuff done, why are the Democrats in the Senate so determined to do nothing? Why are they wasting time on political show votes? Why are they not allowing amendments and debate on important bills? Why are they blocking legislation that has passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support and is right now sitting on Senator REID's desk waiting for a vote?

Our Nation faces great challenges, and many Americans are hurting. Republicans have solutions that will create jobs while strengthening our energy security, improving our health care, and cutting government redtape. New numbers came out just last week that show America's labor force participation rate is at about the lowest level it has been in decades. The House of Representatives—where Republicans are in charge of the schedule—has passed more than 40 bills to help get Americans back to work. Those bills are sitting in the Senate waiting for a vote. Is that what the President means when he says people want to get stuff done?

There was a headline in Politico on Tuesday morning that read "Majority say that President Obama a failure." A new poll found that 52 percent of Americans think the Obama Presidency has been a failure. So what do Washington Democrats do in response? Absolutely nothing.

People want Washington to deal with the challenges that matter most in their individual lives. We could start by doing something about the President's health care law that is causing so much harm to people across the country.

A bipartisan plan has already passed the House that would stop the employer mandate that businesses provide expensive Washington-mandated health insurance. That part of the President's health care law forces small businesses to cut hours—therefore cutting paychecks—for the workers and is also holding back hiring. We should take up that legislation here in the Senate.

We should restore people's freedom to buy health insurance that actually works for them and their families because people know what works best for

them. They don't need Washington to tell them. We should replace the President's health care law with reforms that actually get people the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs.

The people I talk with back at home in Wyoming are also worried about energy costs—especially since it is starting to get colder in much of the country. Washington should be looking for ways to help Americans produce more affordable, reliable, and efficient energy right here at home. The opportunity is there. That would mean jobs for American families, and it would also mean energy security for our Nation.

We could start right now by approving the Keystone XL Pipeline. For 6 years the application has been sitting waiting for action. A bill to do that passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. Why aren't we voting on that today in the Senate? The Obama administration admits the pipeline would actually support thousands of good American jobs. The application to build the Keystone Pipeline has been stalled for 6 years. The administration should demand action today. If the President won't do it, Congress still could and should.

Congress should pass legislation to speed up exports of liquefied natural gas. Our Nation has abundant supplies of natural gas, and producers want to export it to customers around the world who are seeking it. The Obama administration has delayed the permits to let them do it. Democrats right here in the Senate have delayed the bipartisan solution that has already passed the House. We should take a vote on that bill today and pass it.

We should pass a bill that would reform the regulations blocking energy production on Federal lands.

We should end the Obama administration's pointless and destructive war on coal and let the men and women across this country who work in that industry get their jobs and their lives back.

American businesses are waiting to create jobs. The only thing standing in the way is the Senate majority leader. Senate Democrats don't want to vote. They don't want to vote to help the millions of Americans who are out of the labor force. They would rather protect the Washington bureaucracy—a bureaucracy that slows down and stifles economic growth.

Cutting through the redtape to help Americans get back to work is one of the top priorities of Republicans, and it should be the top priority of every Senator in this body. We could do it by passing a bill—one that has already passed the House—that would rein in excessive regulations that make it tougher for small businesses to invest, to grow, and to hire.

We could pass another bill from the House that helps businesses defend themselves against abusive patent lawsuits. That is going to help small busi-

nesses hire more people and help them grow. There were 130 Democrats in the House who voted in favor of it. Why aren't we voting on that today? We cannot get a simple up-or-down vote in the Senate. The majority leader will not bring it to the floor. Why won't he allow it?

There is one bill after another that Republicans have offered, Republicans have passed in the House of Representatives—bipartisan bills—and the Senate Democrats don't want to talk about them. They don't want to talk about Republican ideas for tax reform that would lower tax rates and make the whole tax system simpler, more fair. They don't want to talk about Republican ideas to strengthen and stabilize the entitlement programs—such as Social Security and Medicare—to make sure they are there for future generations. They certainly don't want to talk about Republican ideas to address Washington's out-of-control debt.

Those are the kinds of measures we should be talking about today on the floor of the Senate. That is the legislation which Republicans have introduced and which we are going to keep fighting for in the Senate. That is what the American people are talking about when they say they want Washington to get stuff done. They don't mean more terrible ideas like the President's health care law and its multiple damaging side effects. They don't mean job-killing redtape and Washington mandates. They don't mean political show votes that would restrict Americans' free speech.

President Obama and Democrats in the Senate have turned their backs on middle-class families who are desperately in need of jobs. Democrats want to waste time while they are trying to salvage their political careers. Republicans want to help get Americans back to work.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PRISCILLA A. ROSS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, one of the joys of being an elected member of Congress is getting to hire and know and work with dedicated public servants who toil behind the scenes—our staffs. One of those individuals is my policy director Priscilla Ross, who first joined my staff over 16 years ago when I was serving in the House of Representatives.

I rise this afternoon in a bittersweet moment to thank Priscilla for her service to me, the citizens of Maryland, and all Americans on the occasion of her departure from the Senate.

Starting next week she will be the senior associate director for Federal

relations at the American Hospital Association, AHA, which is the national organization that represents and serves all types of hospitals, health care networks, and their patients and communities. The AHA is comprised of nearly 5,000 hospitals, health care systems, networks, other care providers, and has over 43,000 individual members.

Priscilla Ross is a consummate Senate staffer. She is extremely intelligent. She has mastered her subject areas, which include health care and budget. She works hard. She is both a pragmatist and an original creative thinker. She works well with her colleagues across the aisle and across the Hill. She is a problem solver. She sees the big picture but pays attention to detail.

Her political acumen and sense of timing are first rate. She tells me what I need to know and, more importantly, what I need to hear—even when I don't want to hear it. Above all, Priscilla has been driven by a passion to help people and make things better for Americans, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable among us. The disparity of health outcomes between different communities and racial groups in this Nation—I know—continues to concern Priscilla, who has made me more aware of the problem.

Members of Congress, especially Senators, depend on their senior staff to sort through the innumerable demands on our time and to help us concentrate our time on the most important opportunities and priorities. To do that as well as Priscilla has done for 16 years requires not only deep policy expertise but a shrewd understanding of the Senate and a comprehensive familiarity with the people and the institutions of Maryland. It also demands a willingness to bring a seasoned, respectful skepticism to the scores of requests every Senate office receives every week to support this or that legislative initiative and to have the judgment to sort out the strong policy cases from the powerful interests. In that, Priscilla has excelled. I am grateful for the high standard she has met.

Priscilla came to Capitol Hill to improve people's lives. She has succeeded in that regard—far beyond what most of us are able to accomplish. She has had an extraordinary career.

While I am sad that she is leaving the Senate, I take solace in the fact that she is not leaving “the arena.” She will continue to find ways to make health care better, more accessible, and more affordable for all Americans in her new post at the AHA.

Priscilla is a proud native of the District of Columbia—born and raised in the shadow of the Capitol building, so to speak. She likes to reminisce about taking the number 30 bus along Independence Avenue to her school at Tenley Circle every day. She said that as a child she never imagined she would some day work in the Capitol building she passed on her way to and from school.

Fortunately, at some point, she did get that idea and pursued it. Fortunately for me, I was the one who hired her. Before that happened, Priscilla went to Boston University before finishing her college career at American University, where she received a B.A. in political science. She held a summer internship in the office of Yvonne Braithwaite in California.

She was an outstanding student. She was inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha, which is a national political science honor society, and the Golden Key National Honor Society. She is also a member of the Zeta Phi Beta sorority, a national sorority founded nearly 95 years ago at Howard University here in the District.

Before Priscilla joined my staff, she was the political affairs manager for the American Association of Health Plans, the trade association for more than 1,000 managed care plans across the country. Priscilla also represented the investor-owned hospital industry as an assistant vice president for legislation at the Federation of American Health Systems where she lobbied Congress on issues important to 1,400 hospitals and health care systems with a specific focus on Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement.

In that position she also represented the association in various Washington-based health care coalitions, prepared congressional testimony for association members, designed and coordinated the FAHA grassroots program, staffed the legislative steering and PPS-exempt hospital committees, and drafted comments to proposed Health Care Financing Administration regulations affecting hospital reimbursement.

Priscilla has also worked in health care delivery settings as a new member representative for the Harvard Community Health Plan in Boston, as administrative services coordinator at the Psychiatric Institute of Washington, a private 201-bed acute-care facility, and as an information assistant with Blue Cross Blue Shield of the national capital area. She came to me with some experience, and she used that to help people.

With regard to Priscilla's accomplishments while working on my staff, the list is so long and comprehensive, I will only be able to comment on a few items.

Priscilla has staffed my efforts to repeal arbitrary and unfair outpatient physical, occupational, speech-language therapy caps for Medicare beneficiaries since they were enacted in 1997—first in the House and now in the Senate. Because of Priscilla's efforts we have been able to prevent the caps from being implemented.

With Priscilla's help, the legislation I authored to expand Medicare to include preventive benefits, such as colorectal, prostate, mammogram, and osteoporosis screening was enacted into law.

Thanks to Priscilla's persistence, Congress finally passed the Patients'

Bill of Rights, which means that individuals with private health care plans will have the right to choose their primary health care provider, that women will have direct access to obstetrics and gynecology services and be able to pick their own providers, and that patients with medical emergencies will be guaranteed coverage for necessary emergency room visits in accordance with the “prudent lay person's standard.” Because of Priscilla's work, we were able to move forward in these areas.

Because of the work of Priscilla Ross, tens of thousands of retired veterans and their spouses have access to the health care benefits to which they are entitled, including Medicare Part B, without being penalized for signing up too late. So let me explain.

Under current law, people who do not enroll in Medicare Part B when they are first eligible, to do so must pay a 10-percent penalty for every year they have not participated. But 10 years ago, military retirees could not have anticipated the rules changes that have occurred in military health systems since 1996 when the Department of Defense replaced CHAMPUS with TRICARE, nor could they have known that participation in TRICARE after 1965 would eventually require Medicare enrollment. In some cases, the military advised retirees that Medicare coverage was duplicative, recommending that they do not enroll. We fixed that. I would note that a couple from Oklahoma—not Maryland—brought this problem to Priscilla's attention and the result was we were able to get it done.

While Priscilla has spent most of her time working on health care, she has aptly demonstrated her ability to get things done on other issues. Let me speak for a moment about the fiscal year 2012 consolidated appropriations bill that contained \$919 million for the Small Business Administration—\$189 million more than previous years. This was the first time in many years that the SBA got a bump-up in their appropriation. I was on the Budget Committee at the time.

The Disaster Loan Program received an increase of \$72 million. With Priscilla's help, I authored an amendment to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that increased the surety bond limits from \$2 million to \$5 million to help small businesses. Each of these initiatives was started by Priscilla Ross. She marshaled them carefully through the committee and through the process, and the end result is they became law.

A moment ago, I mentioned that my and Priscilla's concern is about health disparities. The United States spends nearly \$1 trillion in excess health care costs due to racial and ethnic health disparities. Priscilla has taken the lead in fashioning policies to close the gap. It is not just about economics; it is a social justice that strikes at the heart

of who we are as a nation. At Priscilla's suggestion, I authored provisions that establish in statute Offices of Minority Health in the key agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Without the basic research needed to discover the causes of disparities and develop new treatments, we will not be able to make significant progress in closing the gaps, so Priscilla successfully advocated to elevate the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities to the newest institute at the National Institutes of Health. We now have a National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, thanks to Priscilla Ross.

In 2007, shortly after I became a Senator, 12-year-old Marylander Deamonte Driver died of a toothache just a few miles from this building. As the Washington Post recounted:

A routine, \$80 tooth extraction may have saved him. If his mother had been insured. If this family had not lost Medicaid. If Medicaid dentists weren't so hard to find . . . By the time his aching tooth got any attention, the bacteria from the abscess had spread to his brain, doctors said. After two operations and more than six weeks in the hospital, the Prince George's County boy died.

Priscilla was determined to turn this terrible tragedy into something positive. She immediately began working to expand access to health care for all Americans, regardless of their income. Thanks to Priscilla we were able to secure guaranteed dental benefits for children in the reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, along with a dental education program for parents of newborns, and a new HHS Web site and toll-free number with information about the State's dental coverage, and a list of participating providers. We were able to secure funding for a mobile dental health care lab dedicated in 2010 that now carries Deamonte's name. To encourage public service activities that promote oral health, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act includes the provision ensuring that activities assisting individuals in obtaining dental services can qualify for funding.

Each of these accomplishments was initiated by Priscilla Ross.

These are just a few of Priscilla's accomplishments. Suffice it to say that young children across America too numerous to count now have access to dental care, thanks to Priscilla Ross, although they will never know her name. Suffice it to say that seniors across America will be saved from premature death by preventive health screenings, thanks to Priscilla Ross, although they will never know her name. Because of Priscilla, we are closer to a more perfect union, which is the birthright of each and every American, regardless of race, color, creed, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status.

When Thomas Jefferson followed Benjamin Franklin to Paris as Minister of America, he remarked that no one could replace Franklin. He, Jefferson, was merely a successor. I feel the same way about Priscilla: There may be a successor, but no one will be able to replace her.

I thank her for her wise counsel, indomitable spirit, outstanding public service, and enduring friendship, and I wish her the best of luck in her new career.

Thank you, Madam President. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise today to support the Paycheck Fairness Act. Equal pay for equal work is the law of the land. It has been for over 50 years. Yet the law is one thing and the reality is quite another. Women still get paid far less than men for the same work.

Last year Hawaii News Now, a TV station in Hawaii, shared the story of a woman in Honolulu. She had been asking for a raise for over a year, to no avail. Her employers acknowledged that she was underpaid, but they didn't do anything about it. Then she found out a new male hire with less experience would be paid \$5,000 more to do the same job.

She is not alone. In Hawaii a woman makes, on average, 83 cents for every dollar a man makes. While that is better than the national average, it is still not equal pay for equal work.

Research shows that the gender gap in pay begins with a woman's first job and widens from there. So when a young woman graduates and takes her place in the workplace, her starting line is already behind that of her male colleagues. That makes it harder for her to catch up, no matter how hard she works.

The women I know work incredibly hard. Many of them are heads of households and sole breadwinners, which makes the pay inequality that much tougher for them.

The gender pay gap persists even for workers with the same level of experience and education. The gap is even wider for older women.

Congress passed the Equal Pay Act over 50 years ago. As I said earlier, this is the law of the land. Yet the pay gap persists. While the gap has shrunk—not by much—women only earn 77 cents on the dollar nationally. As Senator MIKULSKI often says, in 50 years, women have only gained a few cents.

In 2009, I was proud to support and vote for the Lilly Ledbetter Act which President Obama signed into law. It was the very first bill he signed into

law after his election. Without this law, women had only 180 days after their first discriminatory paycheck to challenge it, even if they only found out about it years and years later. After all, Lilly's employer did not announce they were discriminating against her in pay. So in her case it took many years, and she was far beyond the 180 days the Supreme Court said would be the timeframe in which she could try and get redress.

While the Lilly Ledbetter Act addressed one part of the equal pay problem, if we are going to make sure all women get a fair shot, we need to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. This bill would require employers to prove that pay gaps between men and women are based only on a business reason and not on gender.

The Paycheck Fairness Act will make it easier for workers to compare their salaries and figure out whether they are victims of discrimination. Right now, without this act, employers can still fire workers for sharing the basic information about how much they are getting paid. This bill strengthens penalties for companies that discriminate against women. It would bring class action protection for women in line with other civil rights laws.

The bill includes an exemption for small businesses and a phased-in time for businesses to learn what they are required to do.

In addition, the Paycheck Fairness Act would help prevent pay discrimination in the first place by providing training for both management and workers. This past April 8 was Equal Pay Day. That is the day when women's earnings in this country caught up with men's earnings from the previous year. In other words, it took women 16 months to catch up with what their male counterparts were making in 12 months.

The very next day, here on the Senate floor, every single Republican Senator voted to filibuster the Paycheck Fairness Act, which failed on a procedural vote. I hope our Republican friends will reconsider their position on this important issue this time around.

This year President Obama signed an Executive order to implement parts of the Paycheck Fairness Act for Federal contractors. That is a major step forward for thousands of women. But there are millions more who are not covered by this executive action. Today in the Senate we have another chance to give the women of our country a fair shot, another chance for us to live up to a law that we passed 50 years ago.

I urge my colleagues to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act without delay. Fifty years is long enough to wait.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, all postcloture time on the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 19 is expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATING TO CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES INTENDED TO AFFECT ELECTIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 19) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

The Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary with an amendment, as follows:

That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States:

“ARTICLE—

“SECTION 1. To advance democratic self-government and political equality, and to protect the integrity of government and the electoral process, Congress and the States may regulate and set reasonable limits on the raising and spending of money by candidates and others to influence elections.

“SECTION 2. Congress and the States shall have power to implement and enforce this article by appropriate legislation, and may distinguish between natural persons and corporations or other artificial entities created by law, including by prohibiting such entities from spending money to influence elections.

“SECTION 3. Nothing in this article shall be construed to grant Congress or the States the power to abridge the freedom of the press.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3791

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to the committee-reported substitute, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3791 to the committee-reported substitute.

The amendment is as follows:

In Section 1, strike “and the electoral process” and insert “the electoral process and to prevent corruption”

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3792 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3791

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3792 to amendment numbered 3791.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, insert the following:

“, which shall not be limited to bribery or quid pro quo corruption”

AMENDMENT NO. 3793

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the underlying joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3793 to S.J. Res. 19.

The amendment is as follows:

In Section 1, strike “electoral processes” and insert “the electoral processes and to prevent corruption in government”

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3794 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3793

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3794 to amendment numbered 3793.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, insert the following:

“, which shall not be defined solely as bribery or quid pro quo corruption”

MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3795

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a motion to recommit S.J. Res. 19 with instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary with instructions to report back forthwith the following amendment numbered 3795.

The amendment is as follows:

In Section 1, strike “and electoral processes” and insert “process and prevent corruption in the electoral system”

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3796

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3796 to the instructions to the motion to recommit.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike “system” and insert “process”.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3797 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3796

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 3797 to amendment numbered 3796.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

“, which shall not be constrained to bribery or quid pro quo corruption”

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Udall, Bernard Sanders, Jeff Merkley, Mark Begich, Joe Manchin III, Amy Klobuchar, Tammy Baldwin, Mazie Hirono, Sherrod Brown, Elizabeth Warren, Robert Menendez, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Al Franken, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard J. Durbin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum to rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to the motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed to S. 2199, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on S. 2199, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.